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Local and National

BY V. L. STEVENSON.

NOTED CRICKETER SPEAKS OF TOUR

What Victor Trumper Has to Say
About the Australian's Trip to
England—Much Good Play.

By the P. and O. steamer Macao, Victor Trumper reached Melbourne, on his return from England. Trumper, who is looking remarkably well, chatted about the English tour to the Telegraph.

"Our success in the test matches," he said, "was greatly due to Noble's fine captainship. He used his bowlers with consummate judgment, selecting them according to the nature and condition of the wickets, and English players, who, from practical experience, know most about the same, credited him with positive perfection in placing his field. Of course, he was immensely lucky to win the toss in all five test matches, which, as you know, is, on English wickets, a great consideration. He lifted as well as ever, on several important occasions, and despite the opposite views of some critics, who have never played the game he was not in the least worried or handicapped in his individual play by the responsibilities of captainship. Our two crack left-handers, Bardsley and Ransford, proved rare thorns in the sides of the English bowlers, who are accustomed to bowling outside the off-stump of high-hand batsmen, and coming back. They couldn't bowl at them at all. At the present time, there are hardly any really good left-hand English batsmen, and consequently when opposed to Bardsley and Ransford, English bowlers were at a distinct disadvantage from want of practice.

"I look upon Woolley, of Kent, as about the best left-handed cricketer now in England. He bats, bowls, and fields well, and in the making of a champion. His bowling action somewhat resembles Blythe's. Our two left-handers being dissimilar in style and method, it was a great treat to watch them together. Bardsley relied with confidence on his strong defence, but his forcing strokes from his leg and the wicket, and his cutting both square and behind point, were remarkable, and consistently effective. Moreover he was always solid and never allowed anything to hustle him. Ransford was more enterprising, and playing with level facility all around the wicket, made use of a greater variety of stroke than Bardsley. He also depended on later play in cutting, but it was nevertheless a common thing to see him hit the ball well into the outfield. For a time Ransford, however, was quite unable to get going, but when once started he made up for lost time. I feel sure that had he that first fortnight of failure he would have topped the two thousand aggregate.

"Warwick Armstrong again got through an immense amount of work, and his all-round play was one of the greatest factors in the team's success.

"Concerning Carter, nothing better could have been desired than his wicket-keeping. He was never ordinary, but always good, and frequently brilliant. I very much question whether at the present moment there is his superior behind the wickets in the world.

"Syd. Gregory's cricket cannot be gauged on mere figures. He may fall on unimportant occasions, and when things are sailing along all right; but when there is trouble about, give me Syd.

"At the start of the tour some of the English critics, of the theoretical rather than the practical order, discovered that Carter's arm was too low for an express bowler, that he

was not nearly as fast as formerly, and so on. When wickets were hard, however, the English batsmen looked in vain for the diminished pace. None of the English bowlers were as fast as he, but of course the wickets were frequently too dead for him to be effective.

"By the way, you may be surprised to hear that, despite the wetness of the season generally, we had amazingly few really bad wickets.

"McCartney's first visit to the Old country was an unqualified success. His all-round play more than fulfilled expectations, but his worth lay especially in his bowling and fielding. He was always brimful of confidence, and never seemed to be in the least terror in tight corners.

"Hopkins, and consequently the team, had bad luck at the start of the tour. An injury laid him aside for a week, then a touch of influenza threw him back, and so his services were lost for a couple of test matches. His loss was felt especially in the field, but when he subsequently started he put up some very useful performances.

"Considering that O'Connor would most certainly have been better served by a drier season, and that he was not played regularly, his record for the tour must be considered good. He got hold of the swerve all right, and used it effectively on some of the windy days.

"Whitely, with the experience of this tour, should prove very valuable to South Australia in future. He has conquered the 'en swerve,' and acquired an excellent command of length. His bowling action was greatly admired by many of the most experienced cricketers in England, and especially by Dr. W. G. Grace. It would be difficult indeed to exaggerate the eulogy of Frank Laver, our genial, gentlemanly, good-natured, and energetic manager. No amount of work ever seemed to worry him, or disturb his imperturbability. His splendid success with the ball was no surprise to those of us who had been in England with him before. Frank Laver in Australia and Frank Laver in England are two bowlers of quite different calibre. In Australia he is never selected for test matches; in England he is one of the first. If not actually the first, to be tried with the ball. The difference can only be understood and duly appreciated by those who have played with him or seen him play in both countries.

"I must say a word about that much-abused but, as he proved, irrefutably best of sportsmen, Archie MacLaren. Although he had extraordinarily bad luck in losing the toss in all five test matches, he was always the same good chap and model loser. In more ways than one, he is distinctly the best captain in England, and we estimated that his judgment saved England 50 runs per innings. Furthermore, we are all of the opinion that if MacLaren had been appointed sole selector of the English team, or had had a couple of others to confer with him, our task of winning the rubber would have been much more difficult. MacLaren is a great judge of the game and of players, which he practically demonstrated in connection with the final test match, when he was allowed to decide between the claims of Buckenham and Sharp for the eleventh place. Without hesitation he selected Sharp, and the result must have caused English authorities to bitterly regret their folly in not giving him more extended powers previously."

Davis Cup News And Finances

Over the appropriate pen-name of "Pessimist" a disturbed English follower of the game writes to "Lawrence" (England) on the subject

of Davis Cup finance, and unloads some interesting if rather unconvincing argument. The epistle is reproduced below, and when the reader has digested its contents he is invited to consider a few comments thereon. The Davis Cup will be played for on November 26.

"In America a controversy has been raised as to altering the constitution of a Davis Cup team after playing a preliminary round, exception having been taken to the United States beating the British Isles with one team last year and sending another team to Australia for the final, whereas the British Isles team, in the event of victory in Philadelphia, would have gone on to Australia unaltered. A similar state of affairs, it is contended, prevails this year. It is argued that, whereas the British Isles went down before a powerful team in the preliminary tie, they might have beaten the American team that subsequently lost in Australia, and that the conditions were, therefore, unequal. On the score of fair play, a plea has been made for the British Isles to be opposed this week by the team America proposes to send to Australia, the contention being that we should have an equal chance with Australia of beating the Americans. Had these points been raised a few years ago, I should have regarded them of minor importance, on the score of impracticability and a mutual desire to meet each other in difficulties, but the aspect of affairs has been altered with the introduction of heavy monetary guarantees, and if the present conditions controlling the competition remain, I can foresee stipulations being made for representative teams, or players with names calculated to draw a 'gate'.

For instance, America might not always be prepared to pay the same guarantee for a team of the quality just sent over as they would to receive the Doherty's, and it would hit the L. T. A. very hard if they raised a guarantee fund or (say) £400 and found that some other country sent players over here with no pretensions to international class, in order to collar the bawbees, rather than scratch.

"Financial matters are bound to enter in international sport, but I regard it as unfortunate that the precedent of heavy guarantees was established last year, the more so as we were unable to reciprocate this year, and might some day be in a similar position. What we should endeavor to guard against is crippling the financial resources of the respective National Associations, and better would it be if some international agreement were arrived at with a view to necessary expenses only being guaranteed, rather than any country should be out to scoop in a fat sum, no matter what the quality of its team might be. The 'best available,' as distinct from the very best teams, could be sent from one country to another with easy consciences, and if any money above guaranteed actual expenses accrued from the share of the 'gate' (after expenses have been deducted), it would be thrice welcome, for the reason that no heavy loss would fall on anybody. On the other hand, if the fat guarantee business is proceeded with, it will reach uncomfortable lengths, and it will be a bad day for somebody if the Australians or Americans should be brought over here in a wet summer, or when public interest is on the wane, only to play before small crowds, and scoop up large sums of L. T. A. money. Let us suppose that South Africa, Belgium, Germany, Austria, France, America and Australia all challenged the British Isles for the Cup, what a terrible thing it would be to face demands from all for guarantees—demands that would be established on precedent. As finance has already led to unseemly difficulties and unkind words over the Davis Cup competition, it would appear that the time is ripe for new conditions to be drawn up and an equitable understanding arrived at."

With the first argument many will agree; it is not with the thins of that question, however, that the writer intends to deal, but he intends confining himself to the financial portion of the question. The average Englishman has the reputation in America of being a dull, harmless sort of cuss, and when discussing such an important matter as gate money he would, no doubt, maintain a suitable gravity. "Pessimist" is deliciously naive in implying that America is to blame for this state of affairs. Everyone in tennis circles knows that England would not send a team to the States last year without a financial guarantee, and a large one at that, thus making a departure from existing methods. They were guaranteed £400, and the Americans might fairly have contended that Ritchie and Parker hardly deserved to be assessed at this sum. This year even the English papers severely criticised the National L. T. A. because it was too mean to offer a similar guarantee to America, and again was an English team sent across the Atlantic for the preliminary tie. Parke, Crawley, and Dixor were the chosen trio, and as might have been anticipated, they were soft goods to Larned, Clothier, Alexander and Hackett.

But hark to "Pessimist's" gloomy outlook—"It will be a sad day for somebody if the Australians or Americans should be brought over here in a wet summer, or when public interest is on the wane, only to play before small crowds and scoop up large sums of L. T. A. money." What an appalling prospect! But perhaps it might be remarked that to date the boot is quite on the other foot. When Brooks made his triumphant English tour the English papers estimated that he was worth £1000 to the National Association; Wilding, too, was a big star, and yet they went Home without receiving a penny of guarantee. But when England was asked to return the compliment by sending a team to Australia, a stiff guarantee was at once demanded, and for this was offered a team of players who would have been assessed by experts as worth from the gate-money standpoint about 5 in the £ on the sum demanded. It is, of course, as illustrated by the selection may fairly be laid down that, so

far as the lawn tennis government is concerned, English sportsmanship would appear to be negligible quality, and English parsimony, a prominent feature.

"Let us suppose that South Africa, Belgium, Germany, Austria, France, America, and Australia all challenged the British Isles for the Cup; what a terrible thing it would be to face demands from all for guarantees"—wails "Pessimist." Let this fearful person take heart of grace. Before such a calamity could happen England must regain possession of the Davis Cup, and for the next few years at least her chances of doing so appear tolerably remote. There do not seem to be any rising players of wondrous brilliance in England, and neither America nor Australasia would experience tremendous difficulty in defeating her present best. (By the way, in the letter quoted Australia is invariably used instead of the correct "Australasia.") As for the much-talked-of Doherty's, whose names are always triumphantly brought forth in such discussions, they now appear to have gained discretion at the expense of sportsmanship. It is some time since either Doherty engaged in open competition where there was a chance of suffering defeat, ever since "H. L." failed to materialize in the Challenge round of the Singles Championship when opposed by Brooks. Even if England does manage in the near future to down Brooks and Wilding, it seems to the writer that a defeat by America would inevitably follow. In Australia we have at present no players capable of replacing our champions, while in America there are numerous claimants to representative honors, as illustrated by the selection of two colts unknown, before the

recent American championships for this year's Davis Cup contest in Sydney. When Australia does lose possession of the famous trophy, it seems most likely that it will return to the land of its donor, and remain there for a very long time. bshlp, wdd

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